



A BALANCED VIEW

EUPHORIA IN THE NORTHWEST!

That's the word to describe the good times enjoyed by 120 plus ISASC members, spouses and guests during our Seattle convention, and by 37 of those 120 who jumped at the chance to stay on for a delightful visit to Victoria and Vancouver in British Columbia, Canada. Conventions are hard to compare, mainly because we always carry away a good feeling from each, but this one was particularly noteworthy. The weather gods smiled on us, new and old (seasoned?) collectors turned out in record numbers, friends from overseas made their presence felt, and the program from start to finish created a time of jollity that never seemed to end. Whether it was festive dining, sightseeing, hobnobbing with friends, sharing photo albums and anecdotes, listening to (and learning from) experts, or buying a scale or three at the Silent Auction, there never seemed to be time enough to do all that we had intended.

We'd like to especially acknowledge our collector friends from Canada and Europe who added an international flavour to the proceedings: Diana Crawforth, Janet Scarratt, Bob and Lois Traquair, Jaap and Ronny Visser, Peter and Dian Laycock, Bob Holdaway, John and Doris Corfield, and John and Betty Cheeseman. Then there were the first timers, joining in everything and loving it: Ben Amigable and Patricia, Roy and Kay Campbell, Jim and Dorothy Harrison, Jack and Denise Kahn, Ken and Lucille Kinzel, Deb and Scott Snyder, Al and Melva Stirm, and Debra and Tom Wilson. And then there were those behind the scenes making sure that everything ran smoothly: Steve Beare, Jerry Katz,

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Norm Cima, Ted Stein, Jack Kahn and Jerry Wilson. And then - - to cap things off - - the program stars who held our members in thrall for a good part of the weekend: Jack Young, Diana Crawford, Jaap Visser, and the ubiquitous Jerry Katz. Our thanks to all who were a part of the goings-on, and particularly to the corps of member spouses who took care of the Silent Auction. Across the board, things couldn't have gone better, and this was happily true of our convention finances as well. When all costs were accounted for, ISASC wound up with net proceeds of almost \$2,800, and also benefited from brisk sales of library publications to the tune of an additional \$405. So all in all, Seattle was fiscally solvent and soul/scale-satisfying to boot.

As we do every year, we're enclosing with this mailing a copy of our convention program, to serve as a souvenir for all members and a reminder to those who convened of the good times we had and the pleasures we shared.

NOW, ABOUT SOMETHING SPECIAL.

The year 2001 continues our move into the millennium and heralds our Society's 25th year since its founding. We intend to make 2001 a special year, and as an initial step we're designating our 25th year as our Silver Anniversary. Aside from what else we do to highlight this milestone (and the creative juices are already flowing), we promise you that our 2001 convention will treat the occasion with all the jubilation it deserves. As we told you previously, the site is Chicago, the dates are May 10 to 13, and our hotel setting will be the handsomely restored Allerton Crowne Plaza which towers directly over the heart of Chicago's Magnificent Mile. This coming fall we'll tell you more about our plans to celebrate and what we'll be doing to set 2001 apart from years gone by. For the moment, however, what we'd like you to do is note the dates boldly on your calendar as "ISASC Convention" and make preliminary plans (airline reservations, baby or pet sitters, etc.) to be with us. And do plan to extend your stay several days before and/or after May 10 to 13 so you have plenty of time to take in Chicago's myriad attractions.

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW.

In this case, “old” not meaning “antique,” but rather referring to the old regime, and “new” referring to the new regime, the latter having been in place since the beginning of the year. It’s a pleasure to report that all is well regarding the team of officers now managing our Society’s affairs, with the end result being that our “transition year” of 2000 is going quite smoothly. Tom Dooley has stepped into the President’s shoes and is filling them quite nicely, Jan Macho is functioning ably as our Executive Secretary, and officers/directors Steve Beare, Norm Cima, Jerry Katz, Eddy Konowitz, Ruth Willard, and Jerry Wilson are doing their part in effectively handling a number of newly-acquired responsibilities.

AND WHILE ON THE SUBJECT . . .

. . . of officers, that is, I’d be remiss if I didn’t acknowledge with deep appreciation the “toasting” I received during our convention’s Saturday night banquet. Introduced by Tom Dooley, keynoted by my brother Ted (who, I believe, is still speaking, wherever he is), and carried to complimentary extremes by several officers, it was a highlight of my ISASC life and culminated in my being presented with a handsome scale (postal, of course) with an inscription which touched me to the core and which I’d like to share with you:

TO
BOB STEIN
PRESIDENT EMERITUS
IN APPRECIATION FOR FOUNDING AND NURTURING
ISASC WORLDWIDE
AND FOR 25 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE
MAY 6, 2000

Thanks so very much to all my ISASC friends and companions for adding so much to my life these past 25 years. And now, on to the next 25!

TORONTO MEMBERS SPREAD THEIR WINGS.

It all happened last April 1, when a number of our members, mainly Canadian, met at the Laycock home in the Toronto area. The home itself is spanking brand new, and we're told that the Laycocks built it to custom specifications, in part to provide several very attractive display areas for their extensive collection of postal scales. Viewing these was understandably the highlight of the day, but time permitted an informal presentation on coin scales by Gary Batz, a sharing of photo albums, the showing of a number of scales hand-carried to the get-together, and a preview by author Bob Traquair of the about-to-be published Compilation of Canadian Manufacturers and Distributors of Scales and Weighing Machines (please read next item). Those who made up the group in toto were hosts Peter and Dian Laycock, Bob and Lois Traquair, Utz and Shirley Schmidt, Ed and Hannah Walton, Gene and Ester Labiuk, Joe and Juliet Stroz, and Gary Batz, as well as several guests.

MORE ABOUT CANADA.

It was during our Toronto convention in 1998 that we learned that Canadian member Bob Traquair had collected assorted lists of Canadian scale manufacturers and distributors, along with several scale catalogs and other ephemera having to do with scales in Canada. In fact, it seemed to be one-of-a-kind information that heretofore was unknown to our members, let alone available. Well, all that's changed, as Bob has spent considerable time the past two years bringing the materials up to date and preparing them for publication under ISASC auspices. The title is as stated in the preceding item, the material is formatted to make for uniformity and easy reference, and it's sure to be a welcome addition to any member's scale library. The selling price has not been precisely established (probably \$15 to \$20), but we'd like an indication from our members as to the extent of their interest. The form enclosed tells you more about the publication, and if you see yourself as a prospective purchaser, please fill it out (no obligation) and send it to Jerry Wilson in the envelope provided. And do accept our thanks in advance.

LEADBETTERS GOOD AT GETTING THE LEAD OUT.

Which is a racy way of saying that they do get around. Aside from Winsome (Wally) representing the distaff side of the family at Seattle, she and Ross visited New Zealand recently, and Wally reported on their visit thus - -

“The ISASC member we visited in New Zealand is Bruce Cook. He is surely the most southern member in the world as he lives in Invercargill, which is at the southern end of the South Island. Ross once lived there, during his high school days.”

Thanks, Wally, for keeping us up-to-date on just how far-flung our membership is. Your visiting a collector on the other side of the world is a microcosmic example of what ISASC is all about.

BERNINGS FRONT AND CENTER.

Yes, it's happened again. Bill and Jan Berning's scale collection has been written up in the DeKalb County (IL) Chronicle, and what a fine write-up it is. Rather than attempt to relate it in our words, we're reprinting it in the author's words on the backside of this page. We're sure you'll find it most interesting.

MISCELLANY.

** Our very best wishes to long-time member Emil Cohn on the occasion of his 90th birthday this past June 21. Family and friends from all over the U.S. gathered at Emil's home to celebrate the occasion in festive fashion.

** Member Cliff Lushbough collects scales in two ways: actual scales, and scales pictured on postage stamps. He currently is photographing his 20 postal scales and preparing an article on the dual facets of his hobby for Scott Stamp Monthly.

Couple has no plans to scale back their weighty collection

By STEPHANIE VAUGHAN
Staff Writer

SYCAMORE — Many people display piles of Beanie Babies, boxes of baseball cards or antique stamps and coins in their homes.

But Sycamore residents Bill and Jan Berning took their collection to a location wedged between Rosati's and Videos 4 Less in Genoa's business district.

This is where they display more than 1,000 scales the two have collected over the years — including coin-operated scales, carnival "guess your weight" scales, postal scales and egg scales.

"I saw a little brass scale at an antique store, and I wanted it," Jan said of her 1977 initiation into collecting as she stood among a floor filled with scales. "It kept going, and going, and going."

Bill, who began collecting scales in 1982, found his interest in scales by following an antique route as well.

"I've always liked antiques, and I just drifted into scales," he said.

Hundreds of scales later, the two met at a 1991 International Society of Antique Scale Collectors convention in Chicago.

"We never went to the conventions thinking we would meet someone — it was meant to be," Jan said with a smile.

Now that the Bernings have combined their collections, they also share their knowledge through articles they have written for maga-

zines about antiques.

Last April, a book the couple wrote added also scale weight to their interest in scales. Titled "Scales Collector's Guide," this reference book for collectors, antique dealers, depicts and describes a number of scales. It is available through Barnes & Noble and Amazon retail outlets.

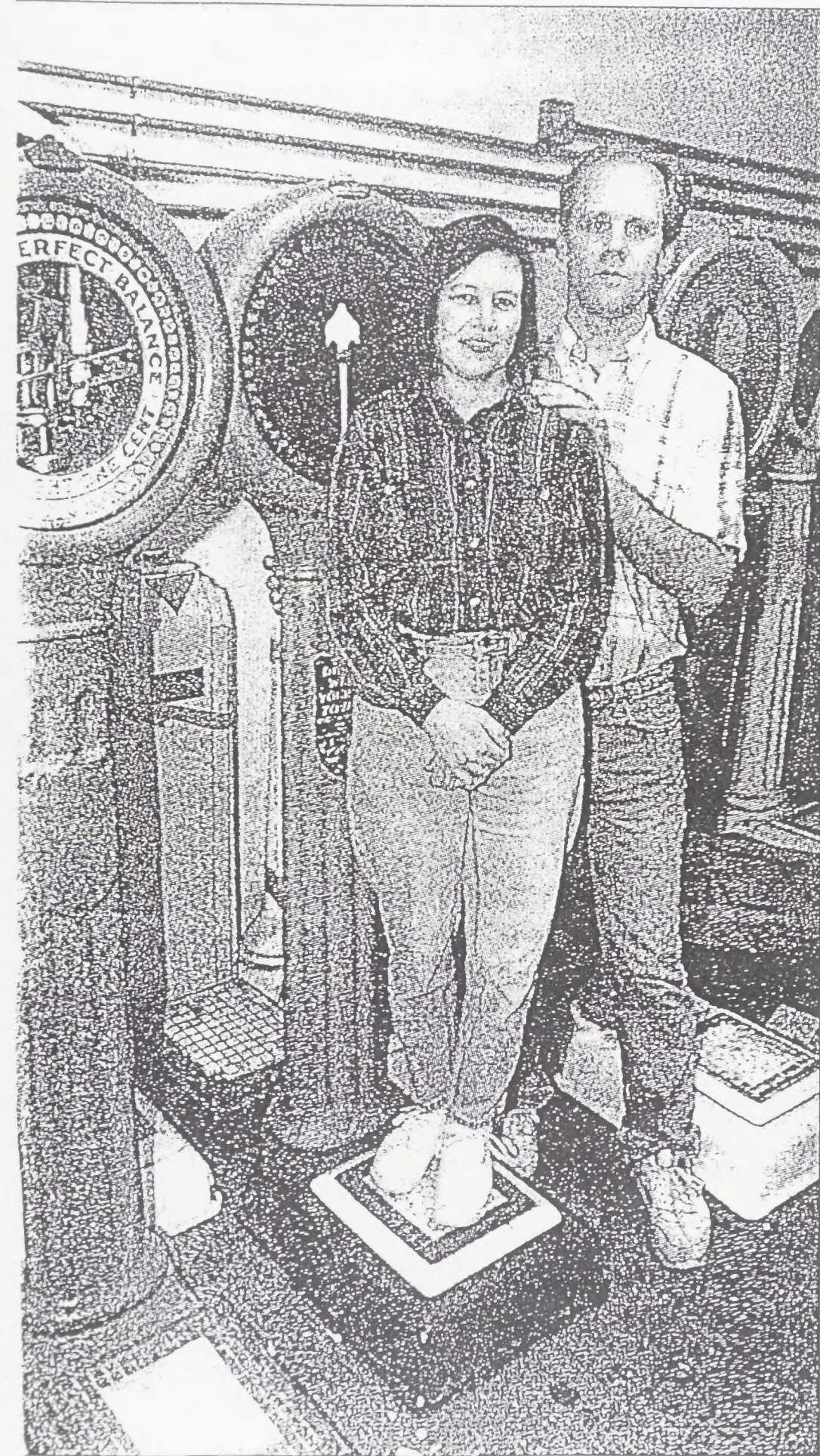
"I used to do research on scales for other people who were writing books and articles about them, and one of the authors said I should write my own book," Bill recalled. "We had all of the knowledge needed to put it together."

Through it all — collecting scales, writing articles, attending conventions once a year, publishing a book about scales — the Bernings find that they are preserving history and nostalgia for "the good ol' days."

"Some of them are so beautiful, so artistic. I like to explore the different mechanisms and see how they work. Each one is so much more interesting than the last," Bill said. "You don't find the sense of design anymore. Now you find the digital ones, they're plastic — they're not as interesting."

And for those who might find a scale collection unusual, Jan suggested taking a look at the types of items others find interesting.

"There are people who collect salt shakers; we collect scales," she said. "That's what we like; that's what we do."



Chronicle photo/JOE BISHOP

Jan and Bill Berning show off part of their collection of scales.

- ** Freelance writer Jim Romeo is writing an article on antique scales as collectibles for Weighing and Measurement magazine (formerly Scale Journal), which enjoys international circulation. Providing him with material for the article are Ruth Willard, our Associate EQM Editor, and Steve Beare, our Membership Chairman. Also, several members will be providing Jim with scale photos, and Jim, in turn, will be giving ISASC full mention for our role in furthering the popularity of scale collecting.

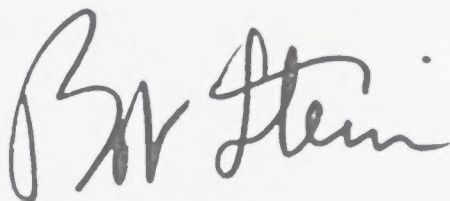
WITH THIS EQM YOU'LL FIND . . .

- ** A revised copy of the 2000 membership directory, to replace the one sent you in late April. It seems that a number of listings were inadvertently left out from the original, so we decided it was best to simply reprint the directory in its entirety. All you need do is keep this one and toss the previous one.
- ** The Seattle convention program, as mentioned earlier. Enjoy.
- ** An updated library list. It's the best (only?) way to keep adding to your storehouse of knowledge about weighing instruments. Order something today!
- ** When it comes to scale auctions, the Internet is big these days and getting bigger as we bid. On the backside of the last page of this newsletter, you'll find two articles that may help you go online with more assurance and with better results.

THE FINAL ANSWER.

As far as ISASC's future is concerned, we think the final answer lies in our ability to keep our Society on track, to continue to grow and prosper, and to rely on friendships and good will as cornerstones of our existence. I know our officers are committed to those goals, and that bodes well for the years that lie ahead.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bob Stein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and a distinct "S".

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Antiques shoppers making deals online

BY CHARLES E. RAMIREZ
GANNETT NEWS SERVICE

SOUTHFIELD, Mich.—Cyberspace is an ironic place to buy and sell antiques.

Nevertheless, the World Wide Web is having a profound effect on the antiques and collectibles industry.

It is estimated that 70 million antique collectors worldwide spend about \$25 billion annually on bric-a-brac and curios. In the United States alone there are about 350,000 antique dealers, 9,000 antique malls and 7,000 antique shows held annually.

More and more people, however, are using modern technology to haggle over old relics.

"The number of antiques dealers and collectors selling and buying online is definitely

growing," said Jim Tucker, director of the Antiques and Collectibles Dealer Association, based in Huntersville, N.C. "It's changing the industry." He is also director of the National Association of Antique Malls, the National Association of Collectors and the Antique & Collectibles Show Promoters Association.

Some antique dealers, such as Bonnie Beckham, embrace the Web. This month, she and her husband, Gary, are closing their Antique Emporium shop in Traverse City after 20 years and will sell their wares exclusively online.

"The market was changing; we knew we had to change with it and that's why we went online three years ago," she said. "But it's becoming too hard to do it and the store

So, we're going online only. We think we're on the right track with our decision."

The Beckhams' Web site is located at www.antique-emporium.com and features everything "from toys to Tiffany."

Other antiques dealers say it's unlikely they'll ever sell on the Web.

"Would you pay \$10,000 for a piece you saw in a photo on a Web site?" asked Scott Keefer, general manager of Flo-Blue Shoppe. "Serious antique collectors pay for quality and top condition. Chips and cracks don't show up well on the Internet."

The Birmingham-based Flo-Blue Shoppe specializes in Flow Blue china. It sells merchandise primarily at antique shows.

Grace Haag, a dealer from Clarkston, agreed but noted more clients were using

the Internet to learn about products.

"I deal in old, and the Internet is not she said. "But I spend less time educating shoppers about the antiques I sell because they've researched them on the Internet."

Cheryl Labadie, a collector from W Lake, said the Internet is helpful but remains a poor substitute for hands-on antiquing.

"I really prefer to see and touch what buying," she said. "I surf the Internet for ideas, but I doubt I'd ever buy anything."

On the other hand, Curtis and Lat Gambrell of Detroit said they won't rule out the possibility of buying an antique online.

"I haven't bought anything yet, but probably will some day," she said. "I like to visit shows and get an idea of what's hot, though."

■ *Special browsers, search engines and automated bidders let shoppers gain more control at popular sites like Yahoo! and eBay.*

Getting the edge in online auctions

BY ANDY IHNATKO
SPECIAL TO THE SUN-TIMES

Why are hundreds of thousands of people rushing to online auction sites?

Why are they all so desperate to bid hundreds of dollars on the sorts of merchandise which, on any given weekend, one can fish out of a Dumpster a few hours after the end of a church bazaar?

More importantly, why is it that it's always someone *else* who winds up owning that 1972 Wilma Flintstone electric toothbrush you've been searching for so intently?

The answer is superior firepower, my friend. You're relying solely on the auction page's search and bidding pages. Popguns and slingshots. Meanwhile, your competition is deploying Trident subs and Patriot missiles to locate and successfully bid on this stuff.

If you really want that warm sense of accomplishment that comes from having blown this week's food budget on a toy you owned as a kid, you're going to have to acquire some new armament.

Take your first step toward auction ninjahood by visiting the AuctionWatch site (www.auctionwatch.com) regularly. AuctionWatch wears at least a half-dozen hats and all of them well. It's a thorough introduction to online auctions. It's also a top source of news and reviews, and even features tools for transitioning from auction consumer to auction shopkeeper.

At this stage, you'll treasure its ability to search every major and minor auction site for you. At the moment, the field of auction sites is a lot like a presidential election. There's the popular winner (eBay), there's the solid also-ran that nonetheless gets its head handed to it

(Yahoo!) . . . and then there are the hundreds of comparably anonymous independents.

As you learn how to find what you want, you begin to actually *bid* on what you want. Before too long, the giddy video-game-like fun of bidding on all sorts of fascinating junk gives way to the cold realization that you've no idea how many bids you've got going or how much dough you're on the hook for.

Any browser can pull up a list of your auctions if you've bookmarked your bidder ID, of course, and Microsoft and Netscape are beginning to incorporate auction-tracking features into their browsers. But as yet nothing can improve on the simplicity and utility of

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stand-alone auction managers.

Beyond Solutions' Auction Browser for Windows (www.auction-browser.com) and Winter Novelty's Auction Action Tracker for MacOS (www.winternovelty.com/aat) are typical fare. Tracking auctions with your browser alone is a twitchy and compulsive process. An auction manager treats a bid as a "live" event, and does most of the heavy lifting for you. Auctions are updated continuously, and you can even get alarms notifying you of auctions that are about to close or warning you that some slimeball has just outbid you on that "Posei-

don Adventure" board game.

But there's one other auction tool, a tool unsurpassed in evil and cunning, the sort of you'd see in a James Bond movie if Blofeld's plan for world domination hinged on his ability to acquire a toothbrush once used by Leonard Nimoy. That tool is David Peller's "The Oracle" (www.the-oracle.com). The Windows app is superlative enough just for its management features (it has the broadest, best-executed feature set I've seen) but automated "sniping" tools bring it into the same class as the Tango Death Laser.

"Sniping" is a widespread and somewhat controversial bidding technique. Normally, you raise your bid for you automatically up to your pre-set maximum. But you're left vulnerable if you're near that amount at the end of the auction. Another bidder can "snipe" you, topping your bid in the last minute of the auction, when you're not there to raise your maximum.

Without the Oracle, sniping means being home at 10:38 on a Saturday night and crossing your fingers that you entered your bid on those "A Shrugged" Happy Meal toys in time. But *with* the Oracle, it means telling the program to "snipe" a specific dollar amount, and it'll get your bid in seconds before closing.

The Internet continues to educate us about the fundamental nature of Humanity. For Barnum taught us that there's a sucker born every minute, but it took eBay and the Oracle to shave that down to a few nanoseconds.

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